

March 6, 2021

Clerk  
Ageing Committee  
[agetestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:agetestimony@cga.ct.gov)

By this letter I am expressing support of **HB 6552 An Act Concerning the Rights of Residents in Long-Term Care Facilities to Use the Technology of Their Choice for Virtual Connections to Family, Friends and Other Persons**. My support is based on my family's experience of my father residing in a Connecticut Skilled Nursing Facility. Roy is 98 years old and is no longer able to place a phone call. He is not always able to answer a ringing phone. He spends most of his time in bed. He does not have good use of his hands, and his arms are weak and limited in movement. He cannot walk and must use a wheelchair or a lift to get from place to place.

During the past year, our access to Dad has been limited due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We were allowed once weekly, social distanced, outdoor visits over the summer. We have spent the fall and winter visiting weekly through a window with an intercom. We rely heavily on daily phone calls to keep in touch. Since Dad's phone abilities are becoming increasingly limited, and we sometimes go days without speaking with him, we attempted to have an Alexa Show (audio and video) installed in his private room. The device would allow us to communicate with Dad without him having to reach for the phone. We could check in on Dad and he could call us using voice commands. We were denied based on current policy.

We are a close family and have promised to always take care of each other, so it is not hard to understand Roy's feeling of loneliness and abandonment. When we can reach him by phone, he cries and begs us to come visit. I believe that our family's experience would be far less painful if we could video visit in private. Scheduling facility staff to hold a tablet for a video visit is not an alternative.

I understand that the skilled nursing facilities have concerns regarding liability and the privacy of residents and staff. I also believe that these concerns can be remedied by posting a sign on the door informing staff that the device is in the room and by having the resident's care plan include turning the camera on and off by way of a mechanical slide during personal care.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

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